

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of dispensing a product from a vending machine, comprising:

receiving a signal from a cellular telephone at a start of the method in order to establish a network connection to the cellular telephone, the network connection enabling the vending machine to dispense the product ~~in connection with use of the cellular telephone;~~

issuing a response to the signal which indicates that the network connection has been established between the cellular telephone and the vending machine prior to dispensing the product;

receiving information indicating that the product has been selected; and

dispensing the product in response to the information ~~after when~~ the network connection has been established.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

outputting ~~the~~ a cost of the product; and

debiting an account for the cost to pay for the product.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the response comprises a visual indication that is displayed on the cellular telephone.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the response comprises an audio indication that is presented via the cellular telephone.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the response is issued and the signal is received over a mobile communications network.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
monitoring an amount of the product in the vending machine; and  
outputting an indication when the vending machine is out of a product.

7. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for dispensing a product, comprising:  
a transceiver which first receives a signal from a cellular telephone in order to establish a network connection to the cellular telephone, the network connection enabling the apparatus to dispense the product ~~in connection with use of the cellular telephone, and which then issues the~~ apparatus issuing a response to the signal which indicates that the network connection has been established between the cellular telephone and the apparatus prior to dispensing the product;  
a retrieving device which receives information indicative of the product; and

a dispensing device which dispenses the product in response to the information and after  
~~when~~ the network connection has been established.

8. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the transceiver outputs ~~the~~ a  
cost of the product.

9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the response comprises a visual  
indication for display on the cellular telephone.

10. (Original) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the response comprises an audio  
indication for presentation via the cellular telephone.

11. (Original) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the response is issued and the signal is  
received over a mobile communications network.

12. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 7, further comprising:  
an inventory monitoring device which monitors an amount of the product in the vending  
machine and which generates an output [a]signal indicating that the vending machine is out of  
the product, wherein the transceiver outputs the output signal.

13. (Currently Amended) A system comprising:

a communications network;

a first communication device connected to the communications network; and

a vending machine comprising:

a retrieving device for obtaining a product from the vending machine;

a second communication device connected to the communications network; and

a dispensing device for dispensing the product from the vending machine;

wherein the first communication device first sends a signal to the second communication device in order to establish a network connection to the second communication device, the network connection enabling the vending machine to dispense the product in connection with use of the first communication device, and the second communication device issues a signal to the first communication device indicating that the network connection has been established prior to dispensing the product.

14. (Original) The system of claim 13, wherein the first communication device comprises a telephone.

15. (Original) The system of claim 14, wherein the telephone comprises a cellular telephone.

16. (Original) The system of claim 13, wherein the second communication device comprises a transceiver.

17. (Original) The system of claim 13, wherein the communications network comprises a mobile radio network.

18. (Original) The system of claim 13, wherein the communications network comprises:  
a telephone network; and  
a gateway server that connects the vending machine to the telephone network.

19. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 13, wherein a code number is associated with the vending machine and the first communication device establishes the network connection to the second communication device using the code number.

20. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 13, wherein the vending machine further comprises an inventory monitoring system for monitoring the inventory of the product.

21. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein the inventory monitoring system outputs a signal when the vending machine is out of the product.

22. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 13, further comprising a peripheral device which receives a second signal from the second communication device and generates a menu in response to the second signal.